



**Town of Fairfax**  
**Select Board Meeting**  
**November 4, 2019 – 7:00pm**

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The drafted minutes presented below are unapproved subject to corrections and/or additions at the next Selectboard meeting. Those corrections and/or additions will be written to an amended version of the minutes, which will also be made available to the public.

**Selectboard Members Present:** Steve Cormier; Chair, Randy DeVine; Vice-Chair, Stephen Bessette and Duane Leach.

**Public Present:** Robby Rodimer, Carl Jones, Lynn Parah, Robert Revoir, Catherine Dimitruk, Steph Lacayo, Adam Lacayo, Joe Benoit, Anita Winette, Todd Wimette, Austin Sachs, Andrea Martin, Michael Frett, John Caissy, Evan Hicks, Jill Decker, Brad Murray & Chris Cota

**Employees Present:** Brad Docheff (Town Manager) Deb Woodward

**Call to Order:** S. Cormier called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**Announcements/Additions:** Additions:

Due to the storm on 10-31-19 and 11-1-19 the Town had many washed-out roads.

The Highway Dept and Subcontractors worked extremely hard to get the roads back into shape. As of tonight, Chaffee Rd is passable but not open to through traffic. Many thanks to the Highway Dept., Fire Dept, EMS Coordinator and Subcontractors for all their work. We will be meeting with FEMA officials this week. More detail in the Town Manager update.

A letter was received from The State of Vermont Office of Attorney General on Opioid Litigation. Our Attorney General Thomas Donovan Jr. is advising that towns join a Negotiation Class involving opioid related litigation, to help hold manufacturers, distributors and large pharmacies accountable for the epidemic. VT cities and towns will be automatically enrolled in the class unless they opt out by November 22, 2019.

**Minutes**

10-21-19 S. Bessette made the motion to accept the minutes as written, seconded by Duane, all in favor.

**Accounts Payable & Payroll Warrants:**

10-28-19 The Town and Utility warrants were reviewed by Sheri.

11-4-19 The Town warrants were reviewed by Randy; Utility warrants were reviewed by S. Cormier.

**Public Comment:** None

**Correspondence:** None

**Andrew Davis, Brian Sullivan and Louis Hodgetts: Reps for Verizon Wireless:**

This is a follow up from the public hearing in September.

Brian Sullivan started the conversation with follow up answers and concerns from the previous meeting. A handout was prepared for anyone who would like a copy. There are many questions answered in this. A balloon float was done shortly after the first meeting to give people a visual of where the proposed tower would be and the height. There were concerns regarding the radio waves. The handout speaks to the well-developed body of scientific evidence showing that RFE, when it's within the Maximum Permissible Exposure limits established by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) does not cause health or safety risk. There was concerns of the tower being a 5G, this is not true. There is no 5G in VT. This site is not being designed for 5G nor would it be a valuable site to be in the future. 5G requires a very high frequency and only travels a couple hundred feet.

S. Cormier asked questions of the representatives as Cormier was not able to attend the previous meeting. How many studies were done to finally select the Fletcher Rd location? Andrew Davis, explained that process starts with RF Engineers contemplated, looked at and dismissed other locations as less than desirable.

S. Cormier followed up on a previous comment that a small proportion of the bandwidth will be used for cell calls compared to data. Brian explained that data takes up more bandwidth then cell calls. More and more data is being consumed and some of the nearby sites are being exhausted.

Questions from the public were now allowed.

Brad Murray a 50year resident of Fairfax whom is also a Ham Radio Operator, spoke about the Inverse Square Law and how to protect yourself from RF exposure.

Steph Lacayo asked if there were any specs on the antennas yet? At this point in the proposed project, Fairfax does not have the specs. Verizon could change the model they would use in Fairfax. The average of the 4 antenna's MHz used would be a 2.145 GHz

John Cassie asked who has the final decision on this project? The Selectboard does.

S. Cormier asked in other areas that are very similar to this, how did the map coverage improve? Brian is in the lead up to projects not follow up, however if Verizon couldn't deliver, they would change their programs to be more accurate.

Jill Decker asked if this tower is not 5G, then how long before it could become 5G. Brian had researched this question from the previous meeting. Verizon doesn't know how long before 5G would be available in more populated

areas such as Burlington. Again, this site in Fairfax is not suitable for a 5G.

Adam Lacayo wondered if there was any outreach for the residents closest to the tower? Our Town Manager has the contact for each resident and provides information to them as needed. Brian expressed that Verizon doesn't see this as having any unreasonable exposure. Should this proposed project come to fruition, the residents can be notified when the tower becomes active.

Catherin Dimitruk as a resident of the area, she is opposed to the tower. After reviewing the Town Plan, the plan refers to our wildlife quarters, natural resources, public land and scenic resources and protecting these areas. She doesn't believe this proposed project in any way accomplishes any of these. Also requested was how much is the town being paid for this project? While this is an ongoing contract negotiation, this information is not public record yet. The town is not hiding anything, we are within our rights to not release this information. Will any pesticides be used in clearing the vegetation or clearing of the sites? Verizon typically does not use pesticides, this is something that could be included in the lease as well. At this time there is no timeline for the project to be decided. More public meetings with Verizon will probably take place.

The site to the proposed tower would require some trees to be removed. The clearing should be minimal however we could also require in the contract for the area to have topsoil brought in and reseeded. As well as planting trees/shrubs around the fenced area.

Robert Revoir asked if at the next meeting Verizon could provide a propagation study of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> best sites. Perhaps this would help the Selectboard decide on the project and help protect the wildlife in the 1<sup>st</sup> choice site.

Follow up questions and or comments were:

This will forever change the landscape of the town.

Could this be put on the ballot to be voted on?

Does the town have insurance to cover any problems 20-25 years down the road?

What happens when or if the Fairfax tower becomes exhausted?

Will there be any negative property values to adjacent owners?

A petition has been put out for signatures to stop the proposed project.

Can we write into the contract no 5G ever?

Residents are encouraged to attend Selectboard meetings to know what is going on in your town.

There were no hard answers for the above questions currently.

When or if there is a next meeting with Verizon officials happens, it will be posted on the agenda. The Selectboard will certainly take all the comments and information into advisement before a decision is made.

#### **Town Manager Updates:**

- The storm from last week left several roads and 2 bridges damaged.
- There are several grants that will be coming available in November. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the sidewalks will be applied for.

- A few grants will be applied for the Community Center to help check off some major areas.
- We will be working with VTRANS and a Bike Ped Program in the Spring for the crosswalk project. The estimated cost in the past were completely unreasonable.
- Public Transportation, VTRANS currently we do not have any good options for residents. We will be looking into options for a bus or car pool that we may be able to bring to town. Ross McDonald from the State is very interested to work on this and would like to meet the Selectboard.
- Broadband, Tim Nolte with MC Fiber is interested in working with the town to see what possibilities there are.
- The highway dept. has been working basically around the clock. Brad will be working to get the funds reimbursed.
- The Recreation Dept. participated with the Trunk or Treat at the school this past weekend. More events will be coming in November and December.

**Adjournment:**

At 8:25 S. Bessette made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Duane, all in favor.

The minutes were respectfully submitted by Amy Sears; Administrative Assistant.

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Steven Cormier  
Selectboard Chair

**\*\* The recorded meeting is available through LCATV or the Town's website. \*\***